

Original Research Article

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18203/2394-6040.ijcmph20193974>

Assessment of family planning practices of women of reproductive age group in rural area of Jammu region

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Received: 08 May 2019

Accepted: 03 July 2019

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ABSTRACT

Background: Despite more than fifty years of implementation of National Family Planning and Welfare programme, unmet need for family Planning is still high which poses a big challenge for family planning programme. The aim is to reach all women whose reproductive behaviour requires one or the other forms of contraception but for various factors are not practicing them.

Methods: A cross-sectional descriptive study was carried out amongst women of reproductive age group in the field practice area of Rural Health Training Centre of Dept. of Community Medicine of a Government Medical College, Jammu during the period of January to June 2018. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Ethics committee prior to the start of the study. Total of 541 eligible couples attending the family welfare section were interviewed by the trained staff using the pre-tested questionnaire. The information about various family planning methods adopted by couple was elicited. Data was analysed by using appropriate test whenever necessary.

Results: A total of 541 eligible couples were interviewed. Maximum couples were in the age group of 30-34 years. 300 (55.4%) couples were using one or the other method of family planning. Condoms were most commonly used method by 148 (49.3%) couples followed by oral contraceptive pills (30.6%). Among permanent methods of family planning, tubectomy was adopted by 10 (3.3%) and vasectomy only by 4 (1.3%) couples. No one was practising any miscellaneous method of contraception. The percentage of family planning methods used by Hindus was maximum (65%). Difference was also observed in the context of socio-economic status.

Conclusions: Nearly half of eligible couples were not practising any method of contraception. There is need to increase motivation among eligible couples to increase adoption of permanent methods of contraception especially vasectomy.

Keywords: Eligible couples, Family planning, Temporary methods, Permanent methods

INTRODUCTION

India became the second most populous country in the world next only to China with a population of 1,311 million in the year 2015.¹ According to the recent report from the UN, the country's population will be more than China by 2028 considering the current growth rate.²

India currently faces a vicious cycle of population explosion and poverty as the resources do not increase in proportion to the population. Family planning is promoted globally as a mechanism to address the reproductive needs of men and women as well as the crucial challenge of rapid population increase.³ India launched a nation-wide family planning programme in 1952, making it the first country in the world to do so to

control the population increase.⁴ Since then family welfare has been an integral component of various Government launched programmes and policy documents like National Health Mission, RMNCH-A National Population Policy, National Health Policy 2017. The services of ASHA to deliver contraceptives at the doorstep of beneficiaries are utilized. Despite more than fifty years of implementation of National Family Planning and welfare programmes, unmet need for family planning and need of birth control is still high which poses a big challenge for development of our country as a whole. The rate of contraceptive use is low in developing countries due to various factors like lower awareness levels, poverty, deep rooted religious beliefs in some communities, limited access and availability. Aim is not only population stabilisation but also to promote reproductive health and reduce maternal, infant and child mortality and morbidity.⁵ We have to reach all women whose reproductive behaviour requires one or the other forms of contraception but for various factors are not practicing them.

Aim

The aim of the present study was to determine the prevalence of different types of contraceptive methods adopted by eligible couples (aged 15-49 years) as a method of family planning.

METHODS

Study design

A descriptive cross-sectional study. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Ethics committee prior to the start of the study.

Study participants

A total of 541 eligible couples attending the family welfare section were interviewed by the trained staff using the pre-tested questionnaire.

Study setting

RS Pura which was a field practice area of Rural Health Training Centre of Dept. of Community Medicine of Government Medical College, Jammu over a period of six months from January to June 2018.

Data collection

The couples who had reported infertility and pregnancy were excluded from the study. One of the partners from eligible couple was interviewed in their houses by the trained staff using the pre-tested questionnaire. Information was collected regarding the use of various family planning methods, unwillingness of contraceptive usage and reasons for unwillingness. Care was taken to maintain the confidentiality of the data.

Data analysis

All recorded data were entered in MS Excel and analyzed in the form of percentage and proportions whenever necessary.

RESULTS

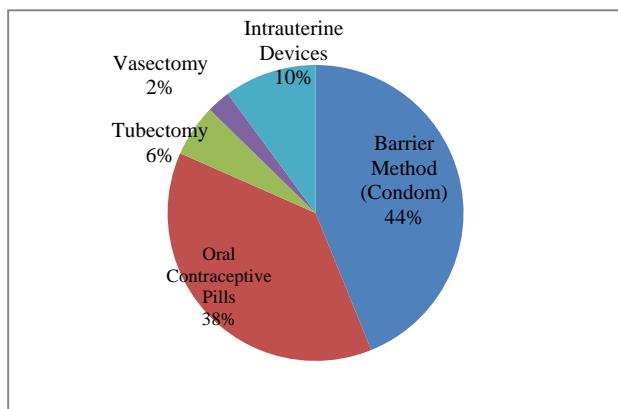
A total of 541 eligible couples were interviewed. Maximum couples using any form of contraception were in the age group of 30-34 years. Contraceptive prevalence was 55.4% as 300 out of 541 eligible couples were using one or the other method of family planning. Condoms was most commonly used method by 148 (49.3%) couples followed by oral contraceptive pills 92 (30.6%) and intrauterine devices 46 (15.33%). Among permanent methods of family planning, tubectomy was adopted by 10 (3.3%) and vasectomy only by 4 (1.3%) couples. No one was practicing any miscellaneous method of contraception. The percentage of family planning methods used by Hindus was maximum (65%) followed by Sikhs (26.4%) and Muslims (9.2%). Difference was also observed in the context of socio-economic status. The highest percentage of using family planning methods was used by middle class (46.2%) followed by upper middle class (29.4%) and least by upper class (2.77%).

Table 1: Distribution of eligible couples according to age.

Age (in years)	Contraceptive use		Total
	N (%)	N (%)	
15-19	21 (7)	48 (20)	69 (12.8)
20-24	16 (5.3)	51 (21.2)	67 (12.4)
25-29	50 (16.7)	86 (35.7)	136 (25.1)
30-34	144 (48)	29 (12)	173 (31.9)
35-39	40 (13.3)	15 (6.2)	55 (10.2)
40-45	29 (9.7)	12 (4.9)	41 (7.6)
Total	300 (100)	241 (100)	541(100)

Table 2: Distribution of eligible couples according to their sociodemographic characteristics.

Sociodemographic characteristics	Total (n=541)	No. of eligible couples using any contraceptive methods (n=300)
		N (%)
Religion		
Hindu	320	195 (65)
Muslim	78	25 (8.3)
Sikh	143	80 (26.7)
Others	0	0
Socioeconomic status		
Upper	15	14 (4.6)
Upper Middle	150	140 (46.7)
Middle	250	121 (40.3)
Lower Middle	106	20 (6.7)
Lower	20	5 (1.7)

**Figure 1: Type of contraceptive method practised.**

DISCUSSION

The scenario of contraceptive usage in our setting was not very promising as only nearly half of the eligible couples (55.4%) were using one or the other form of contraception. Similar results were observed during NFHS 4 survey and in study conducted in Punjab where contraceptive usage rate was 53.5% and 53.84% respectively.^{6,7} However, studies conducted in Southern India, had higher acceptance rates (nearly 80%) of contraceptive methods.^{8,9} Lower acceptance and practice of contraceptives could due to comparatively low awareness levels in rural area, incomplete family size, not willing, fear of side effects and lower education status. Eligible couples from lower middle and lower socio-economic status were among the least users of contraceptive methods. Muslims were the least users of contraceptives (8.3%) while maximum eligible couples 195 (65%) practicing contraceptive methods belonged to Hindu. These results corroborated with research conducted in other parts of country as well.

Among contraceptive methods adopted by eligible couples, condoms were most frequently used followed by oral contraceptive pills and IUD. Tubectomy was more commonly practised permanent method. Similar pattern of usage was reported in other parts of country as well, as published in other studies.^{10,11} The most frequent reasons conceptualized for this are ease of use, free from side effects and temporary nature. There is still high need to sensitize male partners to adopt permanent methods of contraception.

CONCLUSION

The present study concluded that the preferred family planning practice followed was barrier method (condom) and the least preferred method was male sterilization.

Recommendations

- Coverage, access and quality of family planning and welfare services needs thrust at all levels of health system in our area on the lines of Mission Parivar Vikas.
- Strengthening community based distribution of contraceptives by involving ASHAs and focussed IEC/BCC efforts for enhancing demand and creating awareness on family planning through outreach services.

Funding: No funding sources

Conflict of interest: None declared

Ethical approval: The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee

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Cite this article as: Dewan D, Nazir H, Kakkar T. Assessment of family planning practices of women of reproductive age group in rural area of Jammu region. *Int J Community Med Public Health* 2019;6:3804-7.